From Bouchier to Vallouise

Parc national des Ecrins - Saint-Martin-de-Queyrières

Alentours de Bouchier (© OT Pays des Ecrins - Rogier van Rijn)

A stage that gradually leaves the Durance behind to press on further into the Vallouise valley, constantly overlooked by the Montbrison massif.

Hemmed in by the Montbrison massif, as you round a bend in the path you come face to face with the Vallouise valley and the delights in store over the coming days: the village of Vallouise, the Ailefroide valley dominated by Mont Pelvoux, the resort of Puy-St-Vincent, the Col de la Pousterle and more besides...

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 3 h 30

Length : 11.6 km

Trek ascent : 411 m

Difficulty : Medium

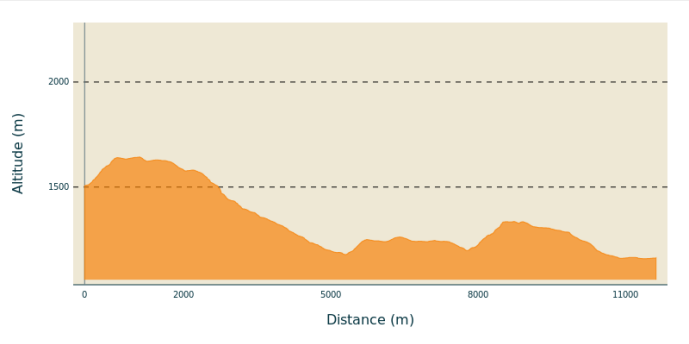
Type : Stage

Themes : History and architecture, Panorama, Top

Trek

Departure : Bouchier
Arrival : Downtown Vallouise
Markings : PR GR
Cities : 1. Saint-Martin-de-Queyrières
2. Les Vigneaux
3. Vallouise-Pelvoux

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1160 m Max elevation 1644 m

As you set off from the car park in Bouchier, leave the track leading to the Gîte le Pas du Loup on your left and take the small path that rises through the base of the valley over a terrain of large boulders. At the first fork, continue straight on. A few metres further on (GR waymark) follow the sign to Bois du Clot. The path climbs up to a spring (large boulder) and then follows the contour line. The path, which turns into a track, is rather vertiginous in places. At the next intersection, head towards Rocher les Rouilles.
1. From here, leave the balcony path to start the descent down to Les Vigneaux. At subsequent intersections, follow the downhill path (Les Vigneaux) (GR waymark). When you reach Barthalay (DFCI (forest fire defence agency) tanks), take the track on the right (Les Vigneaux) following its twists and turns until you come to an intersection with a sign to Les Parchers. Follow this sign and ford the Rif Cros mountain stream.
2. The route sets off northward towards Vallouise. After the mountain stream, take a path on the right (Les Parchers). You come to a track on the left, which you follow. At the intersection 50 metres beyond a hairpin bend, take the path on the left (Les Parchers). The track turns into a path with a superb view over the valley. When you reach Le Parcher, follow the paved road uphill (Bois Noir) for a few metres and then bear left towards a charming building with wooden balconies. Pass below the building and follow the path which runs uphill to the left of the building. Follow the steep narrow path, continuing straight ahead until you reach 1,320 metres altitude where you come to an old irrigation ditch which you follow left. At the next intersection (hairpin), take the track leading to the left (Vallouise). When you reach the gate, take the uphill path, ford the Champarie stream and then take a small path running downhill to the left (Vallouise).
3. From here, continue downhill to the La Casse housing estate and Vallouise. At the next intersection, head towards Vallouise. When you come to the houses, take a small path that runs below a house. Before the pylon, turn right towards a large meadow down the hill. You come to a wide path which you follow right for a few metres, then take a path on the left that leads to the large meadow. You follow this path, which turns into a track, which takes you through the meadows to the cemetery and on to the centre of Vallouise.

On your path...

The eagles of the Tête d'Aval (A)

Etruscan honeysuckle (B)

On the south-facing slope, pine forest (C)

The northern wryneck (D)

The Scots pine (E)

The violet bird's-nest orchid (F)

The black woodpecker (G)

All useful information

⚠ Advices

Just after leaving Bouchier, there is a short vertiginous section but it does not present any real difficulty.
Two ford crossings (Torrent de Rif Cross and Champarie stream); exercise caution in stormy weather.

Environmental sensitive areas

Along your trek, you will go through sensitive areas related to the presence of a specific species or environment. In these areas, an appropriate behaviour allows to contribute to their preservation. For detailed information, specific forms are accessible for each area.

Short-toed snake eagle

Sensitivity period: March, April, May, June, July, August, September

Contact: Parc National des Écrins
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Nidification du Circaète-Jean-le-Blanc

Les pratiques qui peuvent avoir une interaction avec le Circaète-Jean-le-Blanc en période de nidification sont principalement les pratiques aériennes comme le vol libre ou le vol motorisé.

Merci d’essayer d’éviter la zone ou de rester à un distance minimale de 300m sol quand vous la survolez soit 1790m d'altitude !

Information desks

Vallouise Park house

vallouise@ecrins-parcnational.fr
Tel : 04 92 23 58 08
http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/

Bureau d'Information Touristique de Vallouise
Place de l'Eglise, 05340 Vallouise

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Source

Parc national des Ecrins

https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr

On your path...

The eagles of the Tête d'Aval (A)

Eagles can be seen gliding around the Tête d'Aval. In the hottest part of the day, they circle on the thermals rising above the limestone cliffs. Having gained height in this way, they can reach their hunting territory without having to flap their wings.

Attribution : Pascal Saulay - Parc national des Écrins

Etruscan honeysuckle (B)

Etruria was the territory of the Etruscans, in the area of present-day Tuscany. Although this honeysuckle does not grow only in Tuscany, it is Mediterranean, however, and only grows naturally in the wild in the southern half of France. Being a plant that needs warmth, it does not grow at altitude, except here where the south-facing slopes are particularly dry and warm. Its large pink and yellow flowers are highly perfumed.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - Parc national des Écrins

On the south-facing slope, pine forest (C)

The track passes through a forest of Scots pines, mixed with some downy oak trees. It is a forest typical of those found in the lower south-facing slopes (those exposed to the sun) in the intra-alpine valleys.

Attribution : Parc national des Écrins

The northern wryneck (D)

In the spring, an odd song can be heard among the old trees in the orchard, a loud song similar to that of the green woodpecker, only slower. It is that of the northern wryneck. This bird owes its name to the extreme way it extends and twists its neck when it feels threatened. Its French name torcol fourmilier is a reference to the fact that it feeds on ants (fourmils in French). Difficult to spot because its plumage merges into the colour of the tree trunks, it gives its presence away by its song when it returns from its migration.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - Parc national des Écrins

The Scots pine (E)

A long trunk that is reddish-brown towards the top, sparse foliage, grey-green needles grouped in pairs... It has to be the Scots pine. Happy in poor soil, this softwood tree can withstand below-zero temperatures as well as summer droughts, and so it is very common in intra-alpine valleys with a continental climate, like the Vallouise.

Attribution : Christian Baïsset - Parc national des Écrins

The violet bird's-nest orchid (F)

In the pine forest undergrowth stands a large, completely purple orchid. It has no leaves, just a few whitish scales on the stem. Lacking chlorophyll (the green plant pigment which plays a role in photosynthesis, the process that allows the production of organic matter), it lives as a parasite on tree roots.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - Parc national des Écrins

The black woodpecker (G)

Sporting a black cap, the black woodpecker is the biggest of the woodpecker family. Wary and solitary, it is difficult to spot, but its strident calls give its presence away. It feeds mainly on ants and insects living in dead trees, which it extracts by hammering into the wood. It hollows out a nest hole in trees. Once the young have left the nest, it may be taken over by owls or forest-dwelling bats.

Attribution : Robert Chevalier - Parc national des Écrins